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H I T KJ

AT AN

OLD MAGISTRATE,

AND AN

IMPARTIAL CITIZEN;

Containing a SLY HINT upon the Art of PAMPHLET WRITING.

The Title of this Letter was formerly, OBSERVATIONS on MR SMITH'S PAMPHLET, the OLD MAGISTRATE'S ANSWER, and the IMPARTIAL CITIZEN'S REPLY, but another Pamphlet coming out at the same time, under the same Title, it was altered as above, to prevent confusion.



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1799.

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OLD MOUNTAIN

IMPERIAL CITIZEN



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H I T

AT AN

OLD MAGISTRATE, &c.

AS a Citizen of Edinburgh, and unconnected with politics, I have read Mr Smith's Address to the Council, the Answer by the Old Magistrate, and the Reply by an Impartial Citizen.

I do not think Mr Smith will condescend to animadvert upon either of these Publications; they contain nothing which will, when instructed, obviate what Mr Smith has stated; and it belongs certainly to other people to relieve him of the burden of explanation.

Mr Smith has alleged, and he has pledged himself to instruct,

First, That of the vast receipt and expenditure of public money, no regular books were kept; nothing to show the extent of the City debt; no regular rental of the City income.

2dly, That the Magistrates of Edinburgh do draw annually from the inhabitants at large, and have done so for these many years past, L. 1500, under the title of Annuity, more than they have any right or authority to do. Mr Smith, in addition to this, says, what, if his premises are correct, may indeed naturally be presumed, that the City's revenue is less efficient than it ought to be; and that no person connected with the City Council can tell the public (their constituents) what the amount of the City's stock truly is; whether it is stationary, on the advance, or the decline.

Answer, p. 1.

Now, it will be observed, that Mr Smith is a responsible man. "Pride, ambition, avarice, or "the more contemptible passions of revenge "and rancour of disappointment," (the venerable Old Magistrate says,) can never be attributed to Mr Smith's independent mind.

As a man detached from politics, I do not enter upon the compliments paid to our Honourable Representative, or to the barbarous reflections heaped upon his political enemies. The greatness of his mind will enable him to discriminate between dutiful respect and fulsome flattery; and his own nobleness of disposition will dispose him to feel, perhaps more sensibly the harsh, indelicate expressions used in his service by his furious devotees, than even those against whom they are directed. The two Gentle-
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men, the one under the title of an Old Magistrate, the other under that of an Impartial Citizen, will, in so far as politics are concerned, very easily perceive in what light their publications are viewed by men of the same way of thinking with myself.

The publications last mentioned, however, have by no means a bad effect let their merit be what they will; the attention of the public is thereby kept alive, and the expectation of people interested for the good of their country, and for the credit and support of the metropolis become uniformly directed to the matters of greater importance, and which interest every Citizen in it. The facts stated by Mr Smith are perfectly relevant; they infer, when proven, no small degree of obloquy upon the administrators of so extensive a trust-fund, who, though in a public line of life, are equally amenable to the public (their constituents,) as any man of business would be to his individual employer. The want of regular books is held in our courts of law as a sufficient ground to refuse an indigent debtor the *flexile remedium* of a decree of *Cessio*. A man of business, in the management of his constituent's estate, will not be exonerated without the production of a regular rental of that estate; and, if it can be shown, that, in the execution of that trust, he has drawn more than what he

is entitled to, he will incur a charge of infamy. The averment, that his predecessor in that trust also did these very things, will not free nor prevent him being called to account so soon as the wrong is detected.

Now the Old Magistrate, and the Impartial Citizen should recollect, *that these* points do only interest the public. Their politics and disappointments are quite different subjects. The former is entitled to be canvassed by every Citizen; the latter becomes only important when connected with it; and to me who knows nothing but what is contained in these Publications, your charge against Mr Smith, of *avarice, of disappointed hopes, &c.* do really seem to me as if, in the confused state of the Town's Revenue, some real patrimonial interest must be acquired from it. In so far only have I patience to read among matters of much greater importance, the low scurrillities that pass among you. I am much mistaken, if the public at large do not look to some individual gentlemen in Council, who ought to know their business, for a cool, dispassionate statement, to the facts stated in Mr Smith's Paper, and which require no argument.

There is something, however, which I would say to the Old Magistrate, and the Impartial Citizen, if I thought they were worth powder
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and shot. Both these virtuosos seem to pay the highest possible encomiums to the copious flow of language, elegance of stile, and beauty of composition of Mr Smith's Pamphlet. It does not occur to me, that any thing uncommonly beautiful runs through that Paper. The state given by Mr Smith, was simple matter of fact; and any elegance of diction, or fluency of language, was truly impossible. I saw a plain story told; and the only elegance in it was its simplicity. But as to the composition of the Old Magistrate, and the Impartial Citizen, there appeared to me an elegance of language, and a beauty in the stile, that at first surprised me; but the dilemma was, that after repeated readings, I could hardly discover the application of it, so foreign did their arguments appear to the subject. The stile of language was perfectly familiar to me: as much so as if I had seen a handwriting, with which I had been long acquainted, but could not recollect the writer. I considered, for some time, and at last recollected the Works of Junius. There I found, that the Old Magistrate, and the Impartial Citizen, had devoted all their attention. Unable of themselves to form one concise idea, they have culled out every abusive expression which they found in the correspondence between Junius and Sir William Draper, and
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the Letters directed to the Duke of Grafton. The Venerable Magistrate, and the Impartial Citizen, have copied in, most servilely, the several passages they thought most rude, without the least regard to the application of them; and sent them off, like a shot from a blunderbush, in the wretched and supposed service of Mr Dundas, in the scandalising of his supposed political enemies. Where the subject forces these virtuosos to deviate from their model, their Pamphlets become altogether unintelligible.

Reply, p. 1. "A liberal education, an acute genius, and a comprehensive understanding," says the Impartial Citizen, "have given you a command over language which few men

Junius, p. 57. "enjoy." "An academical education has given you an unlimited command over the most beautiful figures of speech," says Junius.

Reply, p. 9. "If I was your personal enemy," says the Impartial Citizen, "I would pity and forgive you. You have every claim to compassion that can arise from the disappointment of your intentions. Your disgrace from the Town Council of Edinburgh, of itself, would disarm a private enemy of his resentment, and leave no consolation to the most

Junius, p. 187. "revengeful temper." "If I was," says Junius, "personally your enemy, I might pity and
"forgive

“forgive you. You have every claim to compassion, that can arise from misery and distress. The condition you are reduced to, would disarm a private enemy of his resentment, and leave no consolation for the most vindictive spirit.”

The Impartial Citizen has copied this part pretty correctly. “I thank God,” says he, “that Reply, p. 11.
 “no impudence under the shape of human being, will be able to deny this charge I have fixed upon you, nor your enmity towards Mr Dundas; not you yourself, nor your friend Richard Roe, be he who he will. Even the countenance of your confidential companion the Hosier, appears to fail him, and he seems to blush whenever the name of the Exchange is mentioned.” The words of Junius are: “I thank God, there is not in human Junius, p. 163.
 “nature a degree of impudence daring enough to deny the charge I have fixed upon you; your courteous Secretary, your confidential Architect, are silent as the grave. Even Mr Rigby’s countenance fails him. He violates his second nature, and blushes whenever he speaks of you.”

The Venerable Magistrate in his Work says, that Mr Smith’s attempt “does credit to the mysterious character of his pen;” every

body who can write knows perfectly the character of a pen ; it is drawn uniformly out of a *goose's tail*. Junius says, page 130, in his letter to the Duke of Bedford: " Your history begins to be important at that auspicious period at which you were appointed to represent the Earl of Bute, at the court of Versailles. It was an honourable office, and executed with the same spirit with which it was accepted. Their business required a man who had as little feeling for his own dignity as the welfare of his country ; and they found him in the first rank of the Nobility." This passage is beautifully striking when taken in relation to the context of Junius's Letter. Our worthy Old Magistrate, however, is not so happy in his application of it, though he has the merit to copy in the passage in the same words: " Your history," says he, " began to be important only at that period when you was employed by a well known mercantile house, to arrange the state of their affairs. It was an honourable office, and executed with all that ingenuity that could be expected: Their business required a person who had a turn for the deepest calculation ; and they found this man in Thomas Smith, Esq;" The *learned Old Magistrate* says very modestly,

Ans. p. 15.

modestly, (from an apprehension, I suppose, that he had not copied fairly,) "I will not contend with you in point of composition;" so said Junius to Sir William Draper, (p. 57.); but in the conclusion he assumes an air of more confidence, and hopes that *his* Pamphlet "*will teach* Mr Smith prudence enough not to attract the notice of the public, to a person, (who, unless for the respectable office he lately held, would have pass'd without observation.)" The Baillie has not, however, copied this last part fairly; for (to follow Junius) he ought to have said, what Mr Smith's friends may use afterwards with more propriety, "From the lessons I have given you you may collect a profitable instruction for your future life; they will either teach you to regulate your conduct as to be able *to set the most malicious inquiries at defiance*, or if that be a lost hope, they will teach you prudence enough not to attract the public attention to a character which will only pass without censure when it passes without observation."

I really have not myself patience to point out the miserable, the unhappy, and wretched *disproportion* between the characters of the Duke of Grafton and Mr Smith, to make that language which these *two Litterati* have copied,
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in any degree applicable. The charges against the Duke of Grafton were of the most abominable nature. *Breach of trust in the exercise of his public functions*, was the most prominent feature; and these Letters, parts of which have now been copied, stand unanswered to this day.

The Venerable Old Magistrate, and Impartial Citizen, coupled together, like two spaniels, have arrogated to themselves and have prostituted the beautiful language of Junius, and say, they *will not contend in point of composition with Mr Smith*, who gives a simple story without the least embellishment. They have, to use Junius's language, made themselves, in my opinion, completely "aukward and ridiculous," "by appearing in a laced suit of tawdry qualifications which nature never intended them "to wear."

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ALEX. JARDINE, Printer, Forrester's Wynd.